

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 1, 2006

TO: Robert S. Sherman, Director
Legislative Research Commission

CC: Virginia G. Fox, Secretary
Education Cabinet

Beth O'Donnell, Executive Director
Public Service Commission

FROM: Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Executive Director
Kentucky Commission on the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

RE: TDD Distribution Program Annual Report
for the Fiscal Year 2005- 2006

Enclosed is the TDD Distribution Annual Report for the fiscal year 2005-2006. As per KRS 163.527, this report is to be submitted to the Kentucky General Assembly through the Legislative Research Commission.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at bobbie.scoggins@ky.gov, or at 502-573-2604 (V/T).

The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Since its inception in 1995, the TDD Distribution Program, administered by the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), has served 11,856 applicants. From time to time the program has received letters of thanks from grateful recipients. These letters have served as an inspiration to the staff of the TDD Distribution Program, knowing that this program has been very successful in providing a much needed service to constituents of Kentucky.

“My deepest gratitude for the wonderful CapTel telephones. The Sisters and I feel as if it is like a touch of magic to read the message as we hear it spoken. This had not been possible for years until we heard of your program. Thank you to everyone at the KY Commission, your service has changed the lives of us all! Many Blessings to you all.”

(Hard of Hearing Sister’s – Louisville)

“I recently became speech impaired due to throat cancer surgery and I was totally at a loss for how to communicate with my friends and family on the telephone. I found myself going into a shell of loneliness and depression until one of your Advisory Board members came to visit me and explained there was a device I could use in my home to keep my independence. Then he told me it was free and I could not believe there was a light at the end of my tunnel. I received my TeleTalk speech aid telephone and now I can make calls on my own and my family is much more comfortable with my safety. Thank you so much to all who make this program in Kentucky possible, we are lucky to live in such a wonderful state with resources for cancer victims. “

(Speech Impaired Consumer – Lexington)

“I have received equipment from this program in the past but the machine wore out. It was very expensive to replace and I didn’t know what to do as I am old and on a fixed income. I contacted the Commission and within a short time I had another telecommunication typewriter device I can use to make all my telephone calls again. Thank you for keeping me alive in eastern KY. Without your help many deaf would have no place to turn in my area. You do a wonderful service to us all!”

(Deaf Consumer – Nancy)

“Thank you for the new speech and sound amplified phone and alerting device. With this in my home I can now contact anyone I need to reach. Your program is a true benefit to everyone in KY. Keep up the good work, we need more of you!”

(Hard of Hearing Consumer – Owensboro)

**TDD Distribution Program
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2005 - 2006**

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Ed. D
Executive Director**

In compliance with KRS 163.527, this annual report is submitted to the Kentucky General Assembly through the Legislative Research Commission.

“The Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall provide to the General Assembly an annual report on the operation of the TDD distribution program. The report shall be due on July 1st of each year, beginning July 1, 1995, and, at a minimum, provide:

- (1) The number of persons served and the number of TDDs distributed;
- (2) The revenues and expenditures of the program;
- (3) Discussion of any major policy or operational issues;
- (4) Any changes the Commission plans to make in the program that does not require legislative action; and
- (5) Any proposals for legislative changes in the program.” KRS 163.527

The number of persons served and the number of TDDs distributed:

The TDD Distribution Program has received **1,114** applications during the 2005-2006 fiscal year. The status of these applications for Specialized Telecommunication Equipment (STE) is as follows as of 6/23/2006.

Status	Total
Approved	83
Complete	873
Incomplete	204
Denied	29
Not Active	3
Total**	1,192

*** Total status count does not match the number of applications received during the FY due to receipt in one fiscal year and processing in the next fiscal year.*

DEFINITIONS:

Approved - Applications approved for which STE has been ordered but is pending delivery during the FY, or applications were approved but STE has yet to be ordered. This is the “waiting list” and identifies customers ready to receive equipment once funds are available.

Completed - Applications were approved and STE was delivered to consumers and paid for during the FY.

Incomplete - Applications are pending receipt of verification. Applications lacking information required to determine eligibility (approval/denial) are returned to the applicant with a request for additional information. Applications are kept pending for one year to allow adequate time to provide necessary verification.

Denied – Applications denied because the applicants did not meet the eligibility criteria in order to receive the STE. Notification is sent to each applicant outlining the reason for ineligibility and an explanation of when the applicant might be eligible (i.e. reapplications for a second piece of equipment may be submitted after four (4) years from receipt of the first piece of equipment.)

Not Active – These applications have been pending verification for more than twelve (12) months. The applicant is notified and given an additional 30 days to submit the missing verification and if no response is received the application is changed to Not Active and archived. A new application is required if reapplication occurs after this determination.

873 applicants received their STE during the 2005-2006 fiscal year.
A breakdown of these applicants by degree of hearing loss is listed below:

Degree of Hearing Loss	Total
Deaf	38
Deaf w/ Limited Vision	2
Deaf-Blind	0
Hard-of-Hearing	546
Late-Deafened	4
Severely Hard-of-Hearing	265
Speech-Impaired	18
Total	873

During FY 05-06 the number of applications has increased within the program during this FY because; consumers are reapplying for equipment after four (4) years, the program has completed public relations advertisement at every opportunity and there was a significant change and increase in the kinds of new equipment available within the program. Outreach partnerships have also been increased during FY 05-06 as has awareness of the programs availability throughout the state. The increase in the number of applications for equipment demanded additional staff time to process during FY 05-06, by two full time state staff and one full time temporary service worker.

The number of hard of hearing individuals in the Commonwealth, which includes those self identified as hard of hearing, severely hard of hearing and late deafened, continues to increase as the population ages. The highest demand for equipment comes from this population, 92%, who are in need of amplified phones, speech strengthening telephones, voice carry over telephones and the CapTel device. Requests for standard TDDs, typically used by deaf constituents, continues to decrease. New innovations in technology (i.e. videoconferencing and web cams) and the increase in usage of internet relay service providers to replace traditional telephone lines, has contributed to this reduction as the deaf population replaces standard telephone equipment with computerized technology for communication.

BellSouth partnered with KCDHH again in FY 05-06 to extend our outreach capabilities by including inserts in their billing invoices twice during the year, and promise to continue this service ongoing into FY 06-07. When equipment choices within the program broadened significantly this spring, a mail out was sent to audiologists, speech pathologists, hearing instrument specialists and professionals that work directly with the deaf and had of hearing throughout the state. This increased incoming applications as professionals became more aware of the program's availability and equipment available

to meet the needs of their consumers. This awareness streamlines the application process for the consumer, allowing him/her to acquire an application and obtain professional verification of his/her hearing loss while visiting the audiologist, speech pathologist or hearing instrument specialist, rather than making another visit. Outreach materials are being expanded to include a videotaped explanation of the application process that can be mailed to professionals rather than traveling throughout the state. Program staff also uses videoconferencing, video relay interpreting, AIM and email, as well as traditional voice lines and interpreters, to explain requirements to professionals and consumers on a daily basis.

Hamilton Telecommunications, Inc., Kentucky's Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) provider currently, continues to provide training to consumers, on a one-to-one basis, for those who utilize the relay service. This partnership has been a great benefit to both the Commission and the Relay Service in that Hamilton provides data regarding the trainings conducted in each quarterly report presented at the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) quarterly advisory board meetings conducted with the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Board members. Consumers receiving amplified telephones are trained upon request by staff, volunteers, Commissioners, and local advocates on a case-by case basis. Written directions and videotaped directions (CapTel) are provided as part of the equipment package to the consumers, so one-on-one training is minimal.

The PSC Relay Service Provider contract expired June 30, 2005 and a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued and bids received. Hamilton Relay was awarded the state contract effective August 1, 2005 through July 30, 2008 with the potential for another three years renewal through 2011, if both parties agree. Customer satisfaction with Hamilton Relay is well documented.

State budget constraints minimized travel during this fiscal reporting year. The Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Coordinator attended only one out of state conference during FY 05-06, which was the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) National conference, held in Tucson, AZ in September 2005. Kentucky was elected to host the 2006 National TEDPA conference, as well as the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) conference, which will be held in Louisville, KY from September 6 –13, 2006. Dr. Bobbie Beth Scoggins is serving as state Chair of both conferences and intends to showcase Kentucky's program and other innovative services being considered in Kentucky for incorporation in other state distribution programs.

Equipment vendor contract renewals were processed in April 2006 and one additional piece of equipment related to the CapTel device was added to the service contracts. The

program offers 24 piece of equipment in enough variety to meet the needs of all consumers. Additions to the program or upgrades in technology are consistently pursued throughout the year and can be added to contracts if justified prior to renewal of the contracts each spring.

The TAP Coordinator serves on several Advisory Boards for state, local and national organizations that serve the deaf and hard of hearing population. Meetings are held quarterly for the Bell South Advisory Board, the Kentucky Assistive Technology Service, the Telephone Relay Service providers Advisory Board, and the Lost Chord Society. Written reports are compiled and included in the KCDHH Agency Report, distributed to all KCDHH Commissioners, Cabinet heads and archived as part of the agency's records retention.

A press release was issued from the Shelbyville Senior Citizens Home, announcing a training provided to residents, family and interested public in September of 2005. In May 2006, which was "Better Hearing and Speech" Month, KCDHH issued a press releases which was distributed to local newspapers, distributed within state government by the Education Cabinet and posted on the KY government website. Public Relation efforts were expanded in March 2006 as KCDHH began producing E-blitz information on a broader base. Information critical to the needs of the community is forwarded to consumers with access to the Internet and email addresses and is received on a much timelier base. During the spring of 2006 the KCDHH website was completely revamped and updated and now provides better, more accurate, and timelier information to all who have access.

Staff members with the TAP have taken the following trainings during FY 05-06

- FY 05-06 – Online course – "About Deafness – Accessibility Training" – Includes training on captioning, interpreting, CART, Relay services, Traveling with a Cochlear Implant, Hearing Dogs, Assistive Listening Device, ASL, Deaf Professional and Text Communication methods.
- Griffith Laboratories, Inc. provided a workshop and training to staff and Advisory Board members demonstrating the electrolarynx TeleTalk device distributed by the program.
- Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) training was provided by a Self Help for Hard of Hearing (SHHH) Chapter representative to all KCDHH staff and demonstrated many kinds of devices use to improve the lives of hard of hearing individuals.
- Staff attended several leadership trainings and workshops, and the agency sponsored one such workshop for the Black Deaf Advocates membership to empower this segment of the deaf and hard of hearing population.

Legislative Update:

During FY 05-06 the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) changed its name. This change was brought about by the consumers who felt this name better represented the whole population served. The previous name, TDD Distribution Program, reflected the type of device used by primarily deaf individuals and was no longer effective.

KCDHH and TAP worked through the Legislative process to present bills for both the name change (SB 88) and to increase the funding (HB 468) and effectiveness of the program. Both bills were successfully passed and are being implemented during FY 06-07 and FY 07-08.

Prior to the passage of HB 468 the funding base, a ten cent surcharge appeared on all residential telephone lines to support the TRS/TAP programs. One cent of the ten cents collected was distributed to the TAP and nine cents was retained by the Telephone Relay Service (TRS) provider, Hamilton. In working with the TRS and the PSC it was realized that the surcharge could be reduced across the board. However, the TAP needed additional funding for expansion and rather than reduce the funding base entirely redistribution was recommended. TRS would retain seven cents of the surcharge and the TAP would be allocated two cents, with the overall surcharge still reduced by one cent to nine cents, an actual reduction for the consumer. This increase is effective from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008 unless extended by the General Assembly at a future date.

***The revenues and expenditures of the TDD Distribution Program
For fiscal year 2005-2006***

REVENUE	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2006 Allotment	252,000	251,616
FY 04-05 Rollover funds	3	384
TOTAL REVENUE	252,003	252,000
 EXPENSES		
PERSONNEL EXPENSES	69,900	69,200
State Employee Salary*	29,100	30,456
State Employee Benefits/Fringe*	10,500	10,309
Other Personnel Services	26,800	25,893
Other	3,500	2,542
Total Personnel Services	69,900	69,200
 OPERATING EXPENSES		
Utilities	1,600	2,463
Maintenance and Repairs	16,000	20,271
Postage and Related Services	4,000	1,914
Miscellaneous Services	1,500	4,194
Telecommunications	2,500	2,031
Computer Services	6,000	6,533
Supplies	1,000	2,158
TAP Equipment purchases	146,400	138,410
Travel Expense/ Allowances	2,000	3,797
Miscellaneous Commodities	1,100	645
Total Operating Expenses	182,100	182,416
 TOTAL EXPENSES		251,616
Rollover FY 05-06		384
13-33-340-TBOO BALANCE		As of 6/23/06

* KCDHH General Fund paid for state employee's salary and benefits in order that the maximum amount of equipment could be purchased for consumers throughout the year.

Breakdown of expenditures for equipment distributed to consumers:

Cost analysis of equipment distribute during FY 05-06 is below:

STE	Units	Unit Price	Total
Ultratec 1140 Uniphone	7	\$183.00	\$1,281.00
Superprint 4425 w/ASCII	15	\$338.00	\$5,070.00
Pro 80 Gold	15	\$423.00	\$6,345.00
Pro 80 Gold with LVD	1	\$550.65	\$423.00
Ultratec Crystal Tone Plus	148	\$98.00	\$14,504.00
Ameriphone CL-40	306	\$87.20	\$26,683.20
Dialogue JV-35 Amp Speakerphone	44	\$109.00	\$3,600.96
Ultratec CapTel	82	\$423.50	\$34,481.00
Starplus 45	39	\$79.98	\$3,119.22
ClearSounds 40XLC	51	\$78.85	\$4,021.35
Dialogue XL-50	37	\$93.04	\$3,442.48
Dialogue XL-30	6	\$72.80	\$436.80
Uniden 7248i Cordless	91	\$114.06	\$10,379.46
Ameriphone VCO	6	\$125.00	\$750.00
RC 200 Speakerphone	1	\$375.00	\$375.00
HC-SPAMP Speech Amplified telephone	1	\$60.80	\$60.80
Compact/C	1	\$208.00	\$208.00
Compact/C-TDD	1	\$270.00	\$270.00
PocketComm TDD	7	\$149.50	\$1,046.50
TeliTalk Speech Aid phone	11	\$925.00	\$10,175.00
Total STE (telephone equipment)	870 *		
Ultratec Clarity Tone Ringer	135	\$19.59	\$2,644.65
Sonic Alert TR 75 VAS	211	\$25.95	\$5,475.45
ClearSounds HT-CL1 Combo Signaler	45	\$33.00	\$1,485.00
Vibracell Ring – Tactile Signaler	1	\$90.00	\$90.00
Total Signaling Devices	392		
Demo Equipment / FM system			\$2,042.13
Total Pieces Equipment Purchased	1,262		\$136,367.87 **

* Three consumers receive signalers as their only piece of equipment during the FY.

** Total does not include purchases of equipment for demonstration that was not issued to an individual consumer. Additional equipment; including a personal listening device, and FM sound system was purchased with program funds to assist consumers who come into the office and need to communicate effectively.

One visual alert signaler (VAS), Amplified Ringer, Tactile Signaler or Combo Signaler, in addition to the STE (telephone equipment) is distributed per consumer upon completion of the application. Not all applicants request or receive a signaler, ringer or combo unit with their equipment choice and some applicants request only the VAS / Tactile Signaler/ Amplified Ringer / Combo Signaler. **Therefore, the number of applicants does not match the number of pieces of equipment distributed.**

Discussion of any major policy or operational issues:

The TAP Advisory Board meets in person at least once annually, and has met three times during the FY 05-06 due to the activity with the 2006 Legislative session. Information and updates are provided via electronic mail or regular postal mail between face-to-face meetings. Written reports from each meeting are distributed to members, provided to the full Commission for approval and then archived.

Listed below are the current nine voting members, two Ex-Officio members and three TAP staff. Consumer's term expires on a rotating basis effective June 30th and are replaced as needed through the process of nominating and approving another consumer member to serve on the TAP Advisory Board.

Last Name	First Name	Membership Status
Ziehr	Jeremiah	Deaf Consumer
Green	Bobby	Severely Hard of Hearing Consumer
Fowler	Lewis	Deaf Consumer
Stuckey	Robert	KCDHH Commissioner Representative, Advisory Board Chair
Lawson	Johnny	Speech-impaired Consumer
Volk	Thomas	Speech-impaired Consumer
Rogers	Judy	Hard of Hearing Consumer
Skaggs	Forest	KY Telephone Association Representative
Stevens	Jim	Public Service Commission Representative
Freeman	Trish	KCDHH Commission Chair
Scoggins	Bobbie Beth	KCDHH Executive Director
Holloway	Rowena	Program Coordinator
White	Sharon	Document Processing Specialist III
Bridges	Margie	Database Assistant

Legislative Plans for FY 06-07:

No Legislative changes are planned during the FY 06-07 session. During 07-08 we plan to file a bill requesting that the two cent increase in funding for TAP be continued ongoing within the budget, or that wireless providers be charged a surcharge to match the residential line charges. The outcome will depend on results from the 2007 conference with wireless providers and if there is buy-in towards the TAP.

Regulations (Statutes) will be updated to reflect the changes implemented by SB 88 and HB 468 by October 1, 2006. The program application is incorporated by reference and

will be revised and reprinted to reflect the name change of the program. Other printed materials, such as brochures, flyers, and announcements will be reprinted as exhausted.

Plans for FY 2006 – 2007, not involving Legislative changes include:

The Program Coordinator and Executive Director will host and attend the National Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) conference in the fall of 2006. The Executive Director has worked with the Boards of both TEDPA and the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) organization to plan the 2006 conferences. The Executive Director will attend the NASRA conference in September 2006, where staff from the Federal Communications Council (FCC) will speak on federal mandates, changes and upcoming legislation that will affect Video Relay Service (VRS), Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology.

In partnership with the PSC and the Kentucky Telephone Association (KTA) a conference will be planned and held in the spring of 2007 hosting cellular providers from across the state and encouraging them to learn about the TAP and its services. The goal is to obtain “buy-in” from the cellular providers regarding adding a surcharge on cellular services across the Commonwealth to support the TAP ongoing.

Outreach plans for FY 06-07 include working in partnership with our Relay Service provider, BellSouth, Kentucky Telephone Association, Kentucky Association of the Deaf, Alexander Graham Bell Association, Veterans Administration, Self Help for the Hard of Hearing, American Association of Retired Persons, Kentucky School for the Deaf, Kentucky Department of Education, Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs, Speech and Language Pathologists, Audiologists, Hearing Instrument Specialists, Area Developmental Districts professionals and other public and private agencies who serve the deaf, speech impaired and hard of hearing population, to provide workshops and educational materials on the availability of the TAP and other KCDHH resources. Outreach will be expanded formally once funding increases are stabilized and the agency is requesting that two additional full-time state positions be added the TAP staff to accommodate the workload.